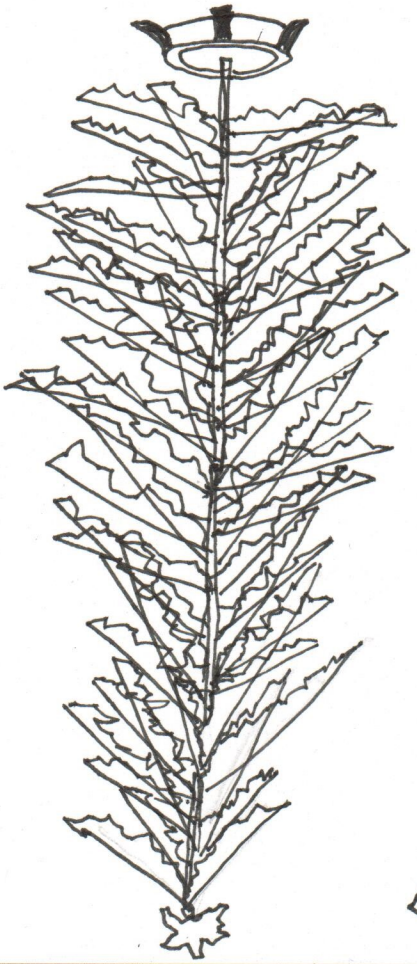


SHAR

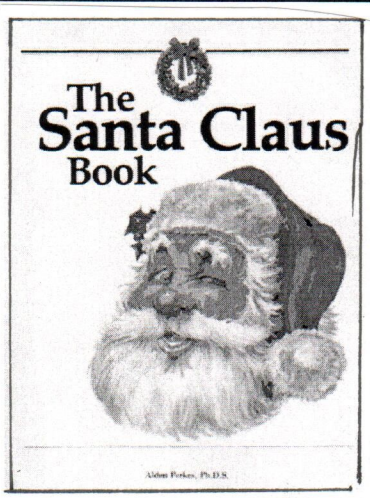
"There are no uninteresting things, only uninterested people."

-G.K. Chesterton

Thomas Vose CC-BY-NC 11/30/22

tvose@hotmail.com

You Should Read:



I love this book so much. It purports to be something of a biography/study/travelogue/ethnography of Santa, the elves, the reindeer, and the North Pole, with amazing artwork and detailed explanations of where Santa and Mrs. Claus came from, how reindeer fly, how they live in the off-season, fauna of the North Pole area, Mrs. Claus' home remedies, Elven ancestry and magic, and much more. It's incredibly clever, warm, and convincing in its own pseudo-scientific way, with fake footnotes and references. Definitely worth tracking down a copy.

How to Play Dreidel!

1. Get a dreidel. Preferably made from clay. Get a lot of chocolate coins (gelt) and distribute them evenly to all players.
2. Everyone puts a coin in the pot, then players take turns spinning.

נ "Nun" Do nothing

ג "Gimel" Take the pot

ה "Hey" Take half the pot

ש "Shin" Add one to the pot

3. If the pot is empty, or has just one coin, everyone should add a coin.
4. Keep going until all but one player is out, or until you feel like stopping before you lose all your chocolate!

Fine-tuning the presentation of these has been something I've been thinking about for a bit. I could, if I wanted, do them fully on a computer. But then they feel less like mine, and while my artistic skills are ~~shit~~ developing, I enjoy the creation process.

I do like the "retro" vibe that comes from working with a typewriter, even one that's a cranky pain in the ass like this one. I even like how the errors stay, that it lends a certain character. It's certainly more readable than my script.

OR I COULD TRY MY HAND AT COMIC LETTERING, I SUPPOSE, BUT IT'S FIDDLY, AND COMES OUT LOOKING REALLY STILTED. TOO ARTIFICIAL.

In the end, I suppose the "warts and all" nature of my handwriting might not be the best direction, but it's the one that lets me feel like it conveys my "voice" the most, for what that's worth.

Ni'ihau is the furthest west Hawaiian island.

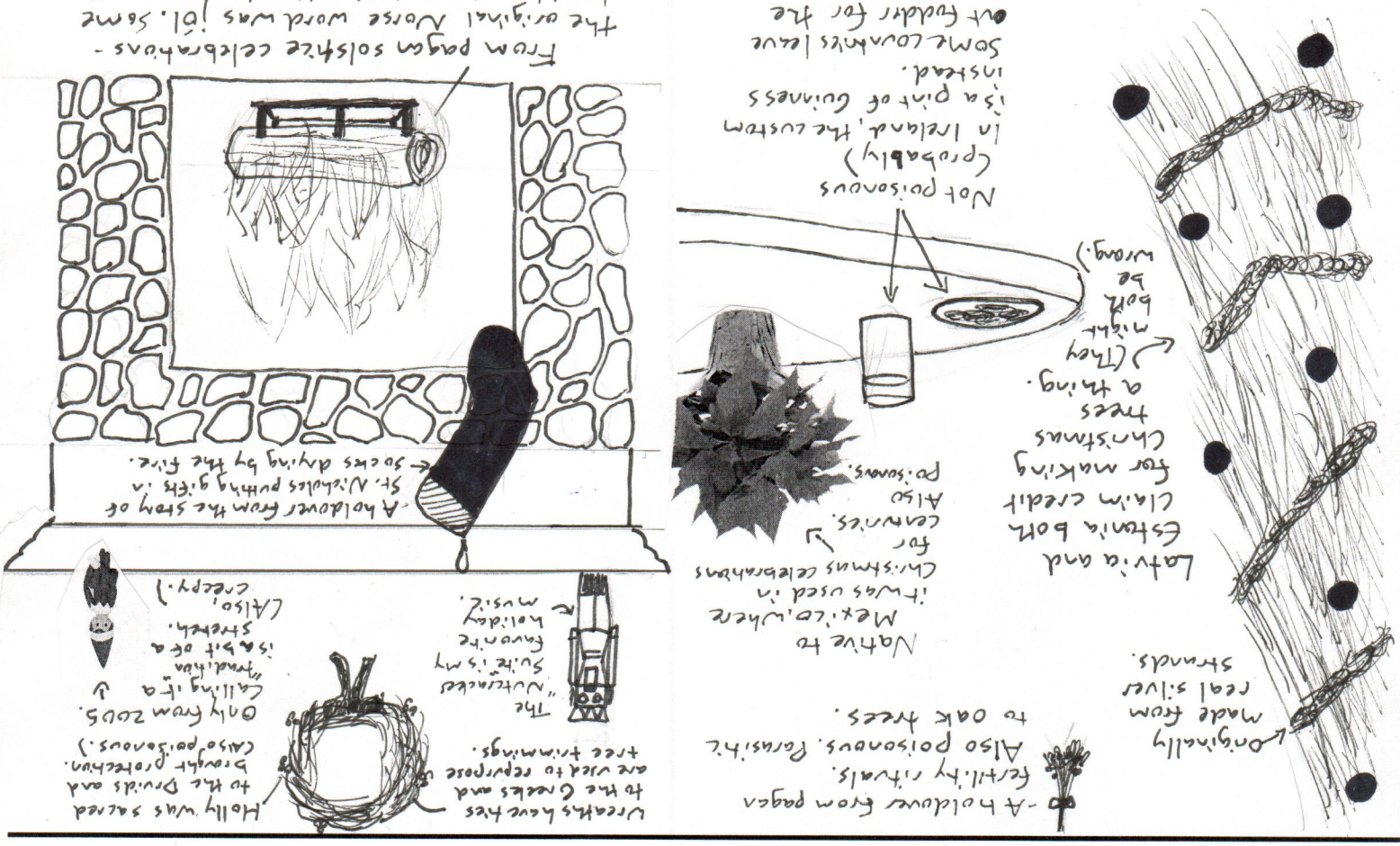
It is privately owned by a family named Robinson and is kept isolated as a sanctuary for the few (35-50) native Hawaiians that live there, as well as for the native flora and fauna.

Access to Ni'ihau is strictly restricted. The people there primarily speak their own dialect of Hawaiian, farm, and use horses and bikes to get around. Many travel between the island and Kauai, and there are concerns about the future of Ni'ihau's culture due to its population decline.

This shit is super-flammable. Many a campfire has been enlivened with packets of powdered coffee creamer. It contains sodium aluminosilicate, (which is an incredibly appetizing-sounding ingredient) that prevents it from caking up, but which burns very easily as a powder.

NOT TAKE:

Cassette tapes were garbage. It was a terrible audio format, with piss-poor sound quality and nasty tape snarling issues, and you couldn't skip to tracks-you just had to keep fiddling with "rewind" and "fast forward". The fact that there's nostalgia out there for this shit is ridiculous. Not everything from childhood deserves a comeback.



you should play

Kingdom of Loathing!

A free, browser-based game that's available at kingdomofloathing.com, this game has been around for almost 20 years now and has spawned two Steam games with the same off-kilter humor - "West of Loathing" and "Shadows over Loathing."

Basically an RPG, it encourages you to explore the ever-evolving eponymous Kingdom, featuring such locations as Mt. McLargeHuge, The Obligatory Pirate's Cove, and Spookyraven Manor, developing your moxie and earning fat stacks of meat (the currency of Loathing).

The writing is hilarious, and the developers still tweak the game constantly after all these years. Plus it's free, so give it a look!

AN ADVENTURER IS YOU!

Simo Häyhä, who became known as the "White Death," served in the Finnish army during the "Winter War," in which Russia tried to conquer Finland at the outbreak of World War II.

During that winter, he personally killed approximately 500 Russian soldiers with an unscoped bolt-action rifle, before being shot in the face himself with an exploding bullet. He survived. Asked how he became such an effective sniper, he simply said, "Practice."

Mom's Christmas Cookies

Cookies

2/3 cup shortening
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1 egg
4 tsp milk
2 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt

Thoroughly cream shortening, sugar & vanilla. Add egg, beat until light and fluffy. Stir in milk. Sift together dry ingredients, blend into creamed mixture. Divide dough into two parts. Chill 1 hour.

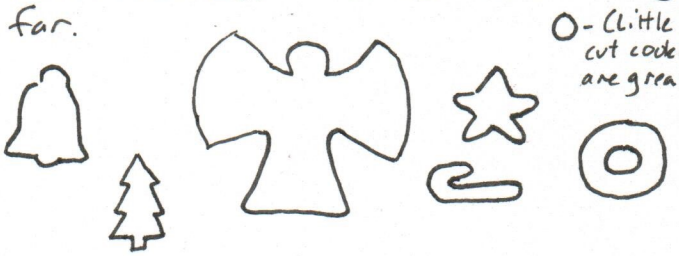
On lightly floured surface, roll to 1/8" thickness. (Keep other part(s) chilled until ready to use). Cut into desired shapes with cutters. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 375° about 6-8 minutes - (6 is preferred to keep them soft). Cool slightly, remove from pan. Makes 2 dozen.

Frosting

6 tbsp. butter
1 pound powdered sugar, sifted
1/4 cup milk
1 1/2 tsp. almond flavoring (or vanilla)

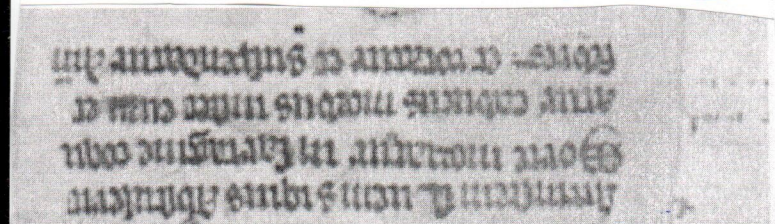
Cream butter, gradually add about half the sugar, blending well. Beat in 2 tbsp. milk and vanilla/almond. Add enough milk to make spreading consistency. Separate into smaller bowls and add food coloring as desired.

N.B. - Quadrupling the recipe is recommended. 2 dozen will not go far.



O - (Little "dot" cut cookies are great.)

Books used to be a lot harder to make and copy, back when everything was written by hand, and much more valuable. Theft of books was very serious business. Enter book curses.



Transliteration: "A book of [the abbey of] Saints Mary and Nicholas of Arnstein: If anyone steals it, may he die [the death], may he be roasted in a frying pan, may the falling sickness and fever attack him, may he be broken on the wheel and hanged. Amen."

There are many surviving examples, all very earnest and imaginative.

The Smell of the Rain

Petrichor is the pleasant, kind of "earthy" smell that comes after a good rain. It's made up of three major factors - all of which rain releases:

Geosmin - a compound from soil bacteria

Plant oils that accumulated since the last rain

Ozone from lightning strikes, carried down by raindrops

Perfume companies have developed scents that rift on or incorporate these components.